



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Jewel Cave
National Monument

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Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

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Highway 16 Project near Jewel Cave on Schedule

Custer, SD – Construction is moving ahead on the reconstruction and realignment of Highway 16 through Jewel Cave National Monument. The project is scheduled to have an asphalt surface by October of 2014. The overall completion date for the project is July 24, 2015. At the present time, construction is progressing on schedule.

Motorists should use caution while traveling through the construction zone. Like any roadway project, hazards are present with this type of activity, which include limited sight distance, large construction equipment and workers close to traffic, and falling rock. Furthermore, motorists should expect delays throughout the summer season; travelers wishing to visit Jewel Cave should plan additional time into their travel plans.

Keith Winter, Project Engineer for the South Dakota Department of Transportation said, “This is an amazing project to work on. The Contractor (Zandstra Construction) and Jewel Cave have been great to work with. It really is a team effort out there and everybody is doing their best to minimize the impact to tourists and the traveling public.”

Due to the construction project, advanced tour reservations are not being taken for the Discovery Talk, Scenic Tour, and Historic Lantern Tour. Except for the Wild Caving Tour, all cave tour tickets are being sold on a first come first serve basis. Interested visitors are encouraged to arrive early in the morning to have the most options for cave tours. The ticket kiosk opens near the visitor center at 8:00 a.m. daily through late August.

Chief of Interpretation Bradley Block states, “The highway project appears to be moving along nicely, and although visitors are witnessing roadway delays, everyone seems to understand the situation. Our visitors have been very supportive, and even with the roadway conditions, we are still witnessing full tours on a daily basis.”

For information relating to the summer tour schedule, visit Jewel Cave online at www.nps.gov/jeca and select the link for Operating Hours and Seasons. The visitor center is currently open daily from 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. MT, with the first tour departing at 8:30 a.m. and the last tour entering the cave at 4:35 p.m. For planning assistance, visitors are also welcome to contact park staff at 605-673-8300.

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